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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CHISINAU 000401

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PBTS](#) [NATO](#) [MD](#)  
SUBJECT: FM STRATAN: SEES PROGRESS ON TRANSNISTRIA; IS UNHAPPY ABOUT  
NATO CENTER

Classified By: Ambassador Michael D. Kirby for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In an April 8 meeting with the Ambassador Foreign Minister Stratan discussed President Voronin's recent phone call to Transnistrian leader Smirnov, the NATO Summit, resignation of the NATO Documentation center leader and the EU Action Plan. The Ambassador asked whether the GOM would welcome a USG initiative to meet with Smirnov, and Stratan was supportive, promising to raise the questions with President Voronin. Stratan was bitter about Romania's role in the NATO Documentation Center, and said he hopes Lithuania will replace Romania as Moldova's NATO contact point.

Opening Dialog with Smirnov  
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¶2. (C) Stratan confirmed that President Voronin had spoken on the phone with Smirnov on April 7, and that the two would probably meet soon. Stratan viewed this conversation as positive proof of the president's efforts to reinvigorate the 5 plus 2 process. The Ambassador mentioned that David Merkel would arrive in Moldova April 13 and go to Odessa for the informal 5 plus 2 meeting. He said that we had asked for an April 14 meeting.

¶3. (C) The Ambassador noted that he had never met with Transnistrian "President" Smirnov, but suggested that given the need for progress on 5 plus 2, such a meeting might be useful. He inquired about the GOM reaction to such an initiative. Stratan responded that he did not think it would be badly received by the Moldovan leadership, if the Ambassador and/or David Merkel were to meet with Smirnov. Stratan promised to check with President Voronin, but expressed his confidence that any such initiative undertaken by the Ambassador would be to the benefit of Moldova. Moldova needs to use all its possibilities to solve the Transnistrian problem, he said.

NATO Summit a Success, NATO Center a Problem  
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¶4. (C) Stratan thanked the USG for ensuring that Moldova's issue of the continued presence Russian troops on its and Georgia's soil was included in the final document. He viewed the summit as a success for Moldova. While in Bucharest, Voronin met with Ukrainian President Yushchenko and the two agreed that the latter would visit Moldova April 25-27. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Ogrzyzko is expected to visit Chisinau on April 14.

¶5. (C) However, Stratan complained bitterly about the situation with the NATO documentation center. The Ambassador expressed his concern about reports that MFA personnel had forced the resignation of the head of the center. (Note: The Romanians recently informed us that MFA representative Dumitriu Rusnac repeatedly threatened center head Gorincioi urging him to quit. End Note.) Stratan complained that under Mr. Gorincioi, the NATO Information Center had been turned into a center for representing Romanian political interests, rather than NATO. Stratan said that the Moldovan Ambassador in Brussels had been working on letting NATO know that this center was a problem. He was working on a letter to the NATO SYG asking for an open competition

for a new director for the center.

¶16. (C) Additionally Stratan noted that the GOM had asked NATO to change the NATO contact point, so that it would not be Romania any more. He said that the Lithuanians had agreed to take up this role, but that there was not agreement that they would do so. The Ambassador promised to raise this issue with the Lithuanians, and suggested that it would be useful for the MFA to invite representatives from NATO Embassies in Chisinau and present its position. (Note: In a separate conversation later in the day, Lithuanian representatives confirmed that they had expressed willingness to be Moldova's NATO contact point; a Lithuanian Defense Attache is expected to arrive in Chisinau in September. End note.)

Good Report Card from the EU  
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¶17. (C) Stratan expressed his satisfaction with the EU report of Moldova's fulfillment of the EU-Moldova Action Plan, putting Moldova in the top four of twelve countries. He was pleased with recognition that Moldova had accomplished a great deal in the past three years. Stratan gave credit to the USG, suggesting that part of Moldova's recent success with the EU is the result of its relationship with the United States. The Ambassador underscored that the U.S. and EU want to see the same results. Though both have noted the passage of many new laws in Moldova, both the U.S. and the EU agree that Moldova had to better implement the many laws it had passed. Stratan underscored Moldova's intention to improve its implementation of laws. He also stressed Moldova's commitment to the European path. However, he was concerned that despite Moldova's progress on a range of issues including a visa facilitation agreement and on trade questions, Chisinau might be set aside by the EU, which would never let Moldova move faster towards EU membership than Ukraine.

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Comment  
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¶18. (C) The Voronin-Smirnov phone call represents a genuine step forward, which could create improved conditions for resumption of talks, but many stumbling blocks still remain in the way of progress.

¶19. (C) Stratan seemed genuinely irritated by Romania's role in the NATO Documentation Center and implied that - in part - the center's chief was forced out because he was crooked. For Stratan seemingly, the icing on the cake was that Gorincioi was the brother-in-law of a prominent member of the opposition. The Ambassador encouraged Stratan to provide local NATO embassies with enough information on the NATO Documentation Center-GOM conflict for us to understand that the MFA's actions not be taken as anti-NATO inspired. In any case, Lithuanian assumption of the NATO contact-point slot can only be good for NATO-Moldova relations.

KIRBY